



## **A Good Man is Hard to Find**

By Chanon Collins

...but this arduous task is rewarded by selecting a professional who has your best interests at heart. My thanks to Flannery O'Connor and her tale of finding a good man, but when individuals successfully implement a process to select a person -man or woman-, the end result will be extremely rewarding. While the act of finding a professional to serve your business and personal needs is extensive and, at times exhausting, this effort will provide you with a sense of serenity. Knowing that your business and personal interests are being served by a competent and trust-worthy individual allows you to focus on the important aspects of your daily life.

When selecting a professional to serve your business and personal needs, you must establish guidelines to ensure that you select the right person. You need to identify your needs so that you can gauge whether or not a professional is a good choice. It is unfortunate that most people evaluate potential professionals based on price. This action of selecting one who charges small fees could bring the adage of "you get what you pay for" to life.

One important aspect of this selection process is to evaluate what you will receive from the professional – is this person offering you value beyond the price? In performing this selection process, it is imperative that you examine the value of the service offered by the professional. While experience and education are essential elements, it is rare to encounter a professional without extensive education and a number of years of experience. Since these things are commonplace, you must look past the basics and evaluate the specifics.

One of the most important elements to examine is the level of trust and confidence offered by the professional. Joe Manning, a CPA with Allen Pritchett & Bassett, LLP, believes that "individuals should seek out a professional who exudes trust and honesty. If a person does not have this ability, the client will not feel that his or her best interests are the professional's foremost concern." Without this rapport of trust and confidence, it is impossible to evaluate the other aspects offered by the professional. No one wants to feel as if they must question and re-examine each piece of advice from a professional.

Another aspect worthy of examination is the amount or level of experience the professional holds in a particular field. Selecting a professional versed in your specific area will increase the value of the service you receive.

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**ALLEN PRITCHETT & BASSETT, LLP**  
POST OFFICE BOX 349, TIFTON, GEORGIA 31793  
229.382.6960 FAX: 229.382.6992  
[WWW.APBCPA.COM](http://WWW.APBCPA.COM)

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Tom Tosto, M.D. feels that people should “individuals should seek out a professional who will respect their rights and requests. People should acquire a person who will provide comfort and piece of mind.” And for the best source of selection information in the medical field, Dr. Tosto adds “ask a nurse.” Professionals who strive to examine and investigate all possibilities to improve your personal and business activities are those who will offer you the most value for your engagement.

Word of mouth is a powerful tool to use in selecting a professional. You should take a moment to examine a valuable source of information – your peers. Carlton Fleming, an attorney with Sims, Fleming, and Spurlin, believes that “a professional’s reputation in the community and with his clients is a true indicator of that person’s ability to serve. People should select a professional based on his or her reputation and skill, not based on a television ad or billboard.” Mr. Fleming also recommends “individuals should examine the professional’s client base to see if he is serving successful people.” These truths speak volumes about the abilities, successes, and value offered by a professional.

Selecting a professional must be based on elements of your design. It is your mission to determine what you want from this person, and you must choose wisely. Above all, select a professional with whom you are comfortable. Joe Manning stresses “developing a relationship with a professional is essential – the professional must be an advocate for your business and personal needs.” After your selection process is complete, you can rest assured, knowing that Mark Twain’s words ring true – “Few things are harder to put up with than a good example.” Let your professional provide these examples for you.

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